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Courage.

Who fails to strike when man's assailed,
For fear of selfish pain or loss;
Who weakly cowers when right is nailed
Upon the proud world's heavy cross;
Who fails to speak the splendid word
Of bold defiance to a lie;
Whose voice for truth is faintly heard,
When party passions mount on high;
Who dares no struggling cause espouse,
And loves no paths by martyrs trod;
Whose timorous soul no call can rouse
To dare to stand alone with God,—
That man is coward, and no deeds
Of valour done on fields of strife
Can prove his courage. Battle meeds
Are naught beside a tested life.

Who dallies with temptation's lure,
Nor hurls his tempter to the ground;
Who champions not the weak, the poor,
Whom power and strength with cords have bound;
Who bows obsequious to the strong,
And crushes what he knows is weak;
Who palters with a deadly wrong,
And dares no vengeance on it wreak;
Who crouches 'neath opinion's lash,
Nor dares his own true thought proclaim;
Who never with an impulse rash
Ran on before his time,—is tame,
Is coward, and no work uprears
Which lasts. God's edict from on high
Says courage shall outlast the years,
But every coward soul shall die.

HATTIE TYNG GRISWOLD.

The Spiritualising of Ethics.

AN ADDRESS

BY THE REV. JOSEPH WOOD.

It has been the glory of our churches to have made much of ethics, especially during the period covered by the Evangelical Revival. In an age when morality was largely divorced from religion, when, in fact, religion stood too much apart from common life, and dwelt in churches, but not in markets, in hymns and prayers and "experiences," but not in buying and selling, it has been our glorious mission to proclaim the absolute oneness of religion with all the duties of every-day life; to insist on the supreme importance of morality; to emphasise the religious duty of honest dealing, truthful speaking, honourable conduct, just measures, kindly forbearance. In season and out of season we have preached cleanness of hands and the divinity of conscience. It has been our blessed privilege to keep alive the faith that morality is an essential part of religion; and I am not sure but that future historians will say that this, rather than our witness for the unity of God and the humanity of Christ, was our most valuable contribution to the religious life of the nineteenth century. Thank God, we have had this grace to keep ethical ideals aloft and shining.

But ideas and churches always tend in course of time to develop the defects of their virtues. The evangelical revival, which under Wesley and Whitfield began so nobly, ended by making everything of feeling, inward experiences, spiritual moods, and by caring little for conduct and morality. Dr. Dale tells us that in matters of practical life and conduct the evangelical revival was very timid. It shrunk from politics. It regarded literature and art with a certain measure of distrust. It never touched the new ethical problems of the new time. It spoke disparagingly of "mere" morality. "In its moral aims and achievements it proved to be seriously defective." * In many quarters it cut off religion from ethics, and religion without ethics ends in sentimentalism, religiosity, and hypocrisy.

Our Free Churches have fallen into exactly the opposite danger. Making much of ethics, they have failed to adequately appreciate the inward and spiritual aspects of religion. We have come to think that ethics are everything, that to cultivate a sense of duty is the whole of religion, that morality is of greater value than spirituality. So our churches abound with ethical men rather than religious men. And while there is much that is admirable about these ethical men they lack the freedom and the joy of the truly religious life. They are men oppressed by the sense of duty; always duty; duty, duty, day and night, presses upon them, a burden and an obligation rather than a song and a privilege, and they know not the joyful liberty of the sons of God. Not for them the child-like life of trust and gladness. They are careful and troubled about many things. Ethics hath its Marthas as well as housekeeping. They are serious and grave and somewhat stoical. They know not the lilt, the songs, the freedom, the unconscious service of a heart that simply loves, and that loving flows forth spontaneously into all righteousness.

Am I belittling ethics? God forbid. But morality cut off from religion is about as fatal as religion cut off from morality. It ends in pedantry, coldness, ineffectiveness. This is one of the reasons why our churches are so sterile and paralysed. I do not say that we have ethics over-emphasised, but I do say that we have religion under emphasised. Our ethics want spiritualising.

Does that sound strange in your ears? Yet I am speaking of a condition which represents so many people in our midst that it may almost be said to be typical of our churches. Here is a man who is a believer in liberal theology. That there is a God who made and governs all things he has never doubted. That the soul of man is immortal he does not question. That reason is the ultimate court of appeal on all points of doctrine he stoutly maintains. That there is a personal devil and a material hell he as stoutly denies. That Jesus is a master to whom he owes gratitude and affection he willingly admits. All that God requires he accepts. The duties of an upright life, purity, honesty, truthfulness, self-restraint—all these he acknowledges. He tries, sometimes painfully, always earnestly, to do his duty. He is a man whose word is as good as his bond. He sets before himself a severe and lofty standard of conduct. Do we not know that man? He often puzzles us. The aim of his life is so high; he is so deserving of respect and honour; and yet—and yet—there is something lacking. He knows it himself, but just what it is that is lacking he knows not. As we look at him we see that there is no joy in all this, no freedom, no inspiration, no spontaneity. He lives with conscience, and yet there is wanting a vividness, a colour, a life, a spring, a hopefulness, which he hears of in other people, which he sometimes seems to be on the verge of, but from which after all he is shut out. He is a good man, but he is not of the saints who sing their Allelulias all day long. There is no Allelulia in his sense of duty. He is like a man with only a partial ear for music when a symphony of Beethoven's is being performed by a fine orchestra. He is conscious that there is something grand going on, but that he is shut out from it. The pleasure which other people feel puzzles him. He tries to feel the joy they feel but cannot. He has not the key to that piece of harmony. His musical sense wants enlarging.

So the ethical sense needs spiritualising, that duty may become a joy instead of a burden; that it may be free and spontaneous, instead

* See Dale's "Evangelical Revival," pp 33-39

of severe rule and compulsion; that it may become effective.

What, then, is meant by the spiritualising of ethics? To answer that question, I must ask another. Why is it that ethical teaching without religion has always been so powerless to move human hearts and wills? Nay, I might go further and ask: Why is it that the ethical character divorced from religious faith is so often unattractive, even in its best form. Looking at life on a large scale, bringing no charge against individuals, but dealing with tendencies and forces in the mass, we may say that ethics alone put too heavy a burden on the human soul. The human will by itself is not strong enough for the task to which ethics call it. And when men fail at the call of ethics, it can only reproach and scold.

The ethical temper taken by itself is cold and stoical, without forbearance, compassion, and pitifulness, and has no power to reach the affections of men. Further, it has no reinforcement for the weakness of human will in the assurance of divine help and succour. Why is it that pure, moral ideas scarcely ever change a bad man into a good man, having no power over the drunkard, the thief, the vicious, but only over those who have already had the benefit of moral training in Christian homes? How is it that the Salvation Army succeeds where ethical culture societies so miserably fail? How is it that moral reforms effected by pure ethics are so feeble? Are not the ethical ideas true? Are they not good? What is the matter with them? Whence their impotence?

What is the matter with the steam engine standing motionless on the rails with its train of carriages behind it? Why does it not speed on? Whence this impotence? Is it not a perfect engine, exquisitely fitted and finished? What does it lack? Motive power. It has no steam in its boilers!

Ethics without religion are as a steam engine without steam. They have no motive power. Knowledge of our duty is not enough, nor is the human will of itself a sufficient dynamic. It needs reinforcement to make it victorious. The teaching is true, but from Plato onwards the problem with all philosophers has been, how to enforce it! I do not deny that you can have ethics—of a sort—without religion, or that you may make something fair and useful of life on that plane. For you can have a science of the earth and of earth's occupations, a theory of agriculture, a knowledge of botany and geology, of bread-baking and shoe manufacture, without ever looking up to the sky, or ever taking sun, moon, stars, planets, winds and clouds into account. With eyes for ever bent on the ground, never lifted to the wonders and witcheries of the blue canopy above, and with no knowledge of the heavenly bodies, you might still live a useful life with some measure of comfort. But how limited! How ineffective in a thousand ranges! How destitute of exhilaration, outlook, and joy! That is ethics without religious faith—the earth without a sky.

Ethics need the sky; that is, they need the conviction that duty is not only a relation between man and man, but also between man and God. Duty is not simply a social product, as our apostles of ethical culture declare, fastened upon the individual by other individuals, his equals and fellows. The voices of my equals shouted in chorus may be louder than my own, but they have no more authority, and no more moving power. What paralyses the ethical man is the want of help, encouragement, and authority from some Superior to himself. Leave out the idea of God, of man's relation to God, of man's responsibility to God, and morality may still be possible for a few choice, heroic spirits. But it will be powerless to touch the common human heart, and even with the finer spirits will tend to become more and more a cold, calculating prudence. The idea of duty by itself is almost powerless; it needs the idea of God for its dynamic.

That is not all. It needs the idea of God in such a form that it shall awaken gratitude, admiration, love. What is wanted to turn duty from a burden into a joy, from an obligation into a delight? That you shall do for love's sake what you now do for duty's sake. Out of love to the Master, who is for us the impersonation of Divine Love; out of a love which has been quickened by much living with him, by enthusiastic contemplation of his excellence, by admiration for his beautiful goodness, by the frequent effort to reach up to his perfections, out of such a love you can do easily and joyfully

what you now do painfully and hardly. Done for love's sake rather than duty's sake, all things take on another and a brighter aspect. For, as in Tennyson's version of the old legend of the "Sleeping Beauty," at the kiss of love

> A fuller light illumined all,
> A breeze through all the garden swept;
> A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
> And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

Says an old psalmist: "My statutes"—these hard, irksome commandments of duty, so impossible to fulfil—"have become my SONG." Morality has developed into religion, and duty is no more a pain, a burden, and a disappointment—it is the music of gladness and of victory. For these statutes are "THY" statutes. Not without loving the statutes can we really keep them. Love is the dynamic of ethics. This was what Matthew Arnold was striving after when he said "that religion was morality touched with emotion." It may be a good deal more, but it is at least that.

A Grateful Heart.

Last night I stole away alone, to find
A mellow crescent setting o'er the sea,
And lingered in its light, while over me
Blew fitfully the grieving autumn wind.

And somewhat sadly to myself I said,
"Summer is gone," and watched how bright and fast
Through the moon's track the little waves sped past,—
"Summer is gone! her golden days are dead."

Regretfully I thought, "Since I have trod
Earth's ways with willing or reluctant feet,
Never did season bring me days more sweet,
Crowned with rare joys and priceless gifts from God."

"And they are gone: they will return no more."
The slender moon went down, all red and still:
The stars shone clear, the silent dews fell chill;
The waves with ceaseless murmur washed the shore.

A low voice spake: "And wherefore art thou sad?
Here in thy heart all summer folded lies,
And smiles in sunshine, though the sweet time dies:
'Tis thine to keep forever fresh and glad!"

Yea, gentle voice, though the fair days depart,
And skies grow cold above the restless sea,
God's gifts are measureless, and there shall be
Eternal summer in the grateful heart.

CELIA THAXTER.

Anecdotes of Bibles.

It may not prove uninteresting to glance at the many curious vicissitudes which have befallen the early translations and editions of the Bible; for these early editions were not favoured with the care and attention now bestowed on a half-penny newspaper. In the early days of printing the necessity of carefully revising the printer's work could not have been realised, for every edition of the Bible was marred by a large number of *errata*.

Archbishop Usher, while on the way to preach at St. Paul's Cross, went into a bookseller's shop to buy a Bible, and was horrified to find, when he got up into the pulpit that the text from which he was to preach was omitted! This formed the first complaint to the king of the careless manner in which Bibles were printed; and, as one of the results, the printing of them was created a monopoly. A great competition then arose between the king's printers of London and the university of Cambridge. The privilege of printing Bibles was at a later date conceeded to one William Bentley; but he was opposed by Hills and Field. The Pearl Bible of Field printed in 1653, is perhaps the most blundering Bible ever issued. It is said to have 6000 errors. The name Pearl given to this book by collectors, is derived from the printer's name for a diminutive kind of type.

The Vulgate of Pope Sixtus V. comes near to, if it does not equal, Field's Pearl Bible in the multiplicity of its errors. This pope, who ascended the chair in 1585, was resolved to have a correct and carefully printed Bible. He specially revised and *corrected* every sheet; and on its publication, prefixed to the first edition a Bull excommunicating all printers who in reprinting should make *any* alteration in the text. Yet the book so swarmed with blunders, that a number of scraps had to be printed for the purpose of being pasted over the erroneous passages, giving the true text. The heretics of course exulted in this flagrant proof of papal infallibility! A copy of this "Scrap Book" was sold some time since for sixty guineas.

There are several "Treacle Bibles" known to book-collectors. The edition of May, 1541, of Cranmer's Bible, at Jeremiah viii. 22, asks: "Is there no *tryacle* at Gilead? Is there no

phisycyon there?" There also appeared a "Rosin" Bible in which that word was substituted for treacle; and a "Bug" Bible, because that unpleasant insect was said by the printers to be the "terror by night," mentioned in the fifth verse of Psalm xci. The "Vinegar" Bible, printed at the Clarendon Press, Oxford, in 1717, is so called from the twentieth chapter of Luke's Gospel being said to contain "The Parable of the Vinegar" (instead of "vineyard") in the summary of contents at the head of the chapter. It was looked upon as a good joke in the times of political corruption when Matthew (v. 9) was made to say, "Blessed are the *place*-makers." The "Breeches" Bible, printed at Geneva, in 1560, said at Genesis iii. 7, that Adam and Eve "made themselves *breeches*." This version is as old as Wycliffe's time, and appears in his Bible. Some curious changes in the uses of words have taken place even since the date of the Authorised Version. For instance, the word "prevent," which in the seventeenth century meant, and ought still to mean, "to anticipate." It is derived from the Latin *prævenire*, "to come before," and in the Authorised Version never means "to hinder." Shakespeare uses "prevent" for "anticipate" in *Julius Cæsar*, v. 1.; and Burns in his *Cottar's Saturday Night*. A printer's error in the Authorised Version, which has been allowed to remain, may be noted in this place: the letter *s* has been prefixed without authority to the word "neezed" in Second Kings iv. 35. It is printed correctly (neesings) in the only other place where it occurs, at Job xli. 18. "Neeze" is also to be found in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ii. 1.

In 1616, some revision and correction was attempted with partial success; but the two Cambridge Bibles of 1629 and 1638 were the first which were printed with tolerable correctness. The edition of 1638 is said to have been revised at the king's command by several learned men of Cambridge, such as Dr. Ward, Dr. Goad, and others. Buck and Daniel, the University printers, were so confident of its correctness, that they challenged all Cambridge by a bill affixed to the door of St. Mary's Church, in which they offered a copy of their Bible to any scholar who would find a literal fault in it. The first person who publicly noticed any of its errata was Dr. William Wotton, who in a sermon preached at Newport-Pagnell, Bucks, noticed an error ("ye" for "we") at Acts vi. 3. An edition printed at Oxford in 1711 is remarkable for a mistake at Isaiah lvii. 12, where a "not" is omitted. And the Oxford Bible of 1792 declared that Philip (instead of Peter) would deny Christ before cock-crow.

From those blundered editions let us now go back to the first complete printed Bible—that by John Fust or Faust, printed at Mayence, in Germany, in 1455. This magnificent work was executed with cut-metal types on six hundred and thirty-seven leaves, some of the copies on fine paper, and others on vellum; and is sometimes known as the "Mazarin Bible," a copy having been unexpectedly found in Cardinal Mazarin's library at Paris. It is also called the "Forty-two Line Bible," because each full column contains that number of lines; and lastly, as Gutenberg's Bible, because John Gutenberg was associated with Fust and Schöffer in its issue. It was printed in Latin; and the letters were such an exact imitation of the work of an amanuensis, that the copies were passed off by Fust, when he visited Paris, as manuscript, the discovery of the art of printing being kept a profound secret. Fust sold a copy to the King of France for seven hundred crowns, and another to the Archbishop of Paris for four hundred crowns; although he appears to have charged less noble customers as low as sixty crowns. The low price, and a uniformity of the lettering of these Bibles, caused universal astonishment. The capital letters in red ink were said to be printed with his blood; and as he could immediately produce new copies *ad libitum*, he was adjudged in league with Satan. Fust was apprehended, and was forced to reveal the newly discovered art of printing, to save himself from the flames. This is supposed to be the origin of the tradition of the "devil and Dr. Faustus," dramatised by Christopher Marlowe and others.

One of the highest prices—if not *the* highest—realised by any book was for a copy of this splendid Bible, at the sale of the "Perkins Library" at Hamworth Park, on 6th June, 1873. A copy on vellum was sold for three thousand four hundred pounds; another on paper for two thousand six hundred and ninety pounds. This

large price is rather surprising; for there are about twenty copies in different libraries, half of them belonging to private persons, in Britain. Before this sale the most expensive book was Boccaccio's *Decameron*, printed at Venice in 1471, which was bought at the Duke of Roxburghe's sale in 1811 by the Marquis of Blandford (Duke of Marlborough), for two thousand two hundred and sixty pounds; although its value fell afterwards to nine hundred and eighteen pounds in 1819, when Lord Spencer became its purchaser.

When Dr. Castell was engaged in the preparation of his Polyglot Bible, he was much patronised by Cromwell, who allowed the paper to be imported free of duty. It was published during the Protectorate, and dedicated to Cromwell in a respectful preface. At the Restoration (1660), Cromwell's name was omitted, and the Republican strains of the preface toned down. The different editions are known as "Republican" and "Royal" among book-collectors. At that time, there was a mania for dedicating books to somebody—a celebrity, if possible.

Before types were invented, printing pictures from engraved wooden blocks was accomplished in the fourteenth century. Books were made of engravings of the most remarkable incidents in the books of Moses, the Gospels, and Apocalyse; they were called *Biblia Pauperum*, or Poor Men's Bibles. Fair copies of these have brought two hundred and fifty pounds; and the very worst, rarely less than fifty pounds. The rare edition of the *Biblia Germanica*, published in 1487, contains many coloured wood-cuts remarkable for the singularity of their designs; for instance, Bathsheba is represented washing her feet in a tub, and Elijah as ascending to heaven in a four-wheeled wagon! The Bishops' Bible—so called from the fact that most of the translators were bishops—was published in 1568. It contained a portrait of the Earl of Leicester, the great and powerful favourite of Elizabeth, placed before the Book of Joshua; whilst another portrait, that of Sir William Cecil—also a favourite of the queen—adorned the Psalms. In the edition of 1574, a map of the Holy Land, and the Arms of Archbishop Parker, the chief translator, were substituted.

'Tis divine to believe in the divinity of men.

A Meditation.

BY THE LATE CARDINAL NEWMAN.*

I am created to do something, for which no one else is created; I have a place in God's counsels, in God's world, which no one else has; whether I be rich or poor, despised or esteemed by man—God knows me, and calls me by my name.

God has created me to do him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another. I have my mission—I never may know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. Somehow I am necessary for His purpose in my place as an archangel in his—if, indeed, I fail, He can raise another, as He could make the stones children of Abraham. Yet I have a part in this great world; I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good, I shall do His work; I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it, if I do but keep His commandments and serve Him in my calling.

Therefore, I will trust Him. Whatever, wherever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him; in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him; if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. My sickness, or perplexity, or sorrow may be necessary causes of some great end, which is quite beyond me. He does nothing in vain; He may prolong life; He may shorten it; He knows what He is about; He may take away my friends; He may throw me among strangers; He may make me feel desolate, hide the future from me—still He knows what He is about.

O Adonai, O Ruler of Israel, Thou that guidest Joseph like a flock! O Emmanuel, O Sapientia, I give myself to Thee! I trust Thee wholly. Thou art wiser than I—more loving to me than I myself. Deign to fulfil Thy high purposes in me, whatever they be—work in me and through me. I am born to be Thine instrument. I asked not to see, nor to know; I ask simply to be used.

* See Cardinal Newman's "Meditations and Devotions."—*Longman's.*

Table Talk of Great Men.

"Literature," says Goethe, "is a fragment of fragments. The smallest part of what has been done and spoken has been recorded; and the smallest part of what has been recorded has survived." But there is a literature which is the most living and delightful of all—the table-talk of great men—of which it might be said that what has been recorded and has survived is to what has been engulfed "in the dark backward and abysm of Time," as the freight of a single ship is to the sunless and sumless treasures of lost galleons that lie in the depths of the ocean. How many biographies—how many libraries of biography—should we give in exchange for a Boswellian record of the conversations between Shakespeare and Ben Jonson to which old Fuller refers, or of the table-talk in the "Mermaid," which Beaumont in a letter to Ben Jonson recalls thus :—

What things have we seen
Done at the Mermaid! Heard words that have been
So nimble and so full of subtile flame
As if that everyone from whence they came
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
And resolved to live a fool the rest
Of his dull life.

It might be said that we have got the best part of these "Mermaid" men in their works—that the wit and wisdom of their works is to the wit and wisdom of their talk as the distilled essence of a thousand flowers is to the flowers themselves. But the table-talk of these poets was so far from being a diffused and confused version of their written work that it differed from it in kind, and not in degree merely—was not only lighter and brighter, but at times subtler and deeper. For what is the result of talking over with a friend any subject of which your mind is full? How then does the subject open out and show itself in all its colours and aspects? And how, also, does your mind itself grow, and gain with the exercise skill, surety of aim, alertness and legerity? It is like a game of lawn-tennis, where the ball is not allowed to drop, but is returned to you again and again, to the quickening of your eye, of your hand and of your foot; while the ball itself, tossed this way and that, backwards and forwards, in the inner or the outer court, is seen in a thousand new lights and angles, "Certain it is," says Bacon in the finest of all his essays, "that whosoever has his mind fraught with many thoughts, his wits and understanding clarify and break up in the communicating and discoursing with another. He tosseth his thoughts more easily; he marshalleth them more orderly; he seeth how they look when they are turned into words; finally, he waxeth wiser than himself; and that more by an hour's discourse than by a day's meditation." Or, as Nat Lee has it :—

Speech is morning to the mind;
It spreads the beauteous images abroad,
Which else lie furled and clouded in the soul.

If, then, these meetings at the Mermaid had had their Boswell, we should have had another Shakespeare and another Ben Jonson, who would have differed from the Shakespeare and Ben Jonson of *Hamlet*, and of *Every Man in His Humour*, not as a nebula differs from the star into which it is to be condensed, but as one star differs from another in glory. Take, for instance, the classical case of Boswell's Johnson. The Johnson of Boswell differs from the Johnson of "Rasselas," "The Rambler" and "Irene," as Ben Jonson, according to Fuller, differed in conversation from Shakespeare. "Which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war. Ben Jonson, like the former, was built far higher in learning, solid but slow in his performance. Shakespeare, like the latter, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention." In truth, in this respect of alertness and legerity, the Johnson of Boswell is not recognisable in the Johnson of "Rasselas" and "The Rambler." But there is a yet more astonishing difference between Boswell's Johnson and the Johnson of literature. Suppose we had had no Boswell, and suppose we had had to judge of the character and of the range of Johnson's powers from his writings alone, should we ever have regarded him as a wit and humorist of the first rank? We should hardly have regarded him as a wit and humorist at all. Judging by his writings alone—if there had been no record of his talk—we should have known that Johnson had a sense of humour, certainly, but we should never for a moment have suspected him of being what he most assuredly was—a supreme wit and humorist. Here most of all we owe Johnson to

Boswell's work rather than to his own works; yet even from Boswell how little have we got compared with what we have lost! Boswell records only the talk of about as many days as Johnson lived years—and the rest? "The rest," as Hamlet says, "is silence."

From this classical instance alone we may infer the immensity of our loss of the unrecorded table-talk of the great—the loss of all the wit and wisdom generated by the collision of great minds. Sir Robert Ball tells us that all the light and all the heat of all the suns come from the collision of vast black-out globes which are careering through space for ever; but he tells us also—and it is a heart-shaking thought—that the number of the numberless stars we see is to the appalling number of these black-out globes careering through space which we cannot see, as a handful of sand is to the sands of the sea shore! And as a handful of sand is to the sands of the sea shore, so is the light that has come down to us from the collision of great minds compared with that which has gone black out for ever into abysmal darkness.

The Living Revelation.

There is one kind of preaching so much more effective than any other that it may almost be called the only kind. It is that which consists in right living.

Nothing else produces belief as sight does. Fact has infinitely more power than logic. And what men need is to *see* religion. The higher forms of faith are usually a very slow growth. The power to walk with the unseen God, having a vivid and abiding sense of His presence, comes even by grace to but few. The great mass of men must begin in a very different way. They must be taught first in the language not of spiritual imagination, far less of logical reason, but of perception. They must see goodness in other men before they can understand what God's goodness is. This is what Christ meant when He told His disciples that they were to be the light of the world.

Men may not understand the "evidences of religion," but they do understand religion itself when they see it. When a man is unselfishly kind to every one about him, they understand that. When one in a whirl of temptation and corruption is known to stand firm and keep his integrity, men understand that. When the sun shines, nobody needs an argument to prove that it is shining. No one can see an act of courage, of generosity, of fidelity, of self-forgetfulness, and not feel its excellence. And whenever one carries through every part of his life the spirit of the Lord Jesus, the spirit of truth and of love, every one who sees him knows something of how beautiful truth and love are. Men doubt about the doctrines and philosophy of religion. But when they see a man sweet-tempered under vexation, they don't doubt his sweet temper. When they see a woman carrying along a worthless husband and a load of helpless children, by her labour and patience and love, they believe in her goodness. Truth in its lower form of intellectual statement, may be questioned; but in its higher form, embodied in life, it instantly conquers the belief of whoever looks upon it.

But, it may be said in objection, belief in human goodness is not belief in religion or in God. We answer, belief in human goodness *is* belief in religion, for goodness is religion; and, further, belief in men is the first step toward belief in God. "If," says the apostle, "a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" Just in the same way we cannot believe in God until we believe in man. It is the goodness that we see first of all in our mother and our father, and then in the other men and women around us, that enables us to conceive of God and have faith in Him. He who greatly loves and believes in his fellow-men is not far from great trust and love toward God.

Further, the goodness that we see in those about us not only commands our trust, but excites a like disposition in ourselves. The contagious power of character is wonderful. It is not only that we set ourselves with deliberate purpose to imitate what we admire. There is a subtle influence, that cannot be analysed or defined, by which goodness, as well as badness, communicates itself between those who are much together. Often a whole family may be seen to have caught the tone of some special excellence from one of their number in whom it was originally strong. In the shop, in the office, in the

neighbourhood, wherever people associate with one another, moral qualities communicate themselves and strike new roots, as a running vine spreads all over the ground about it. A sweet and noble nature cannot live in society without producing sweetness and nobility in others, any more than a fire can burn without giving out heat.

This embodiment of truth in a living form is, according to Christianity, God's own especial method. He made His highest revelation, not through a philosophy, or a code of laws, or a book, but through a man. The truth was *lived* in Jesus Christ. "The life was the light of man." From the records of that life we draw our highest ideas of what man may be, and of what God is. And we are invited to personal companionship with the living Son of God, that through Him our souls may receive Divine inspiration.

But Christ's revelation did not end with His own life. He laid it as His especial charge on His followers that what had been begun in Him should be continued through them. The light that had shone from His person was to kindle in each of their hearts, and shine forth there. In other words, what He had shown to the world in His life they were to show, so far as was possible, in their lives. "Ye are our epistle," wrote the Apostle, "the epistle of Christ, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God." They were to be planets, reflecting the light and heat they caught from the central sun. So, it is for every Christian to be a miniature Christ to those about him. If Christ "dwells in our hearts," it is to be not a solitary presence, but a power to quicken and strengthen whoever we meet.

Blessed power of goodness! Out of men's sight for the most part; in obscure lives; among the poor, the ignorant, sometimes among the very outcasts; scorned by the great things of the world; unconscious of its own merit, and not dreaming of its own power—it is this divine quality in humble men and women and little children, through which God reveals Himself, and through which He is recreating humanity. In our power to shape our own character lies the possibility of our being co-workers with God in His divinest work.

What many a man wants to correct his irritable temper is not a rebuke but a holiday.

Rain.

"It was raining fast when I woke up this morning at six o'clock. It is raining as fast now, at 10 p.m. It has been raining as fast during the whole sixteen hours, with the exception of ten minutes, when the clouds lifted a little and dropped large isolated drops. This is something like rain!" Such would be the entry if I were at this moment writing up my diary; but my purpose of doing so was interrupted by the sudden reflection that, as a dweller for the most part in towns, I have had very little real knowledge of rain. If it were not for fairly frequent visits to the country, that knowledge would be less. For your townsman, who thinks he knows everything, really does not know rain at all. He has the same staring acquaintance with it that he has with so many persons and things. He gives himself away to it as little as he does to a fellow-passenger in train or omnibus. If the skies threaten, you take out an umbrella; but you very likely do not unfold it, even though the skies fall in torrents—it is so much easier to slip into the club or a shop, or to take a cab. Even the poorest of the poor can probably find the shelter of a doorway or an arch. Even the policeman and the cabby, who are the sole and partial exceptions to my law, can very rarely be compelled to suffer the elements unsheltered for so long a time as is needed to form an intimacy with them. At any rate, they have their overalls.

But in the country it is different. In a tramp of fifteen miles or a bicycle ride of forty-five you may scrape a very passable acquaintance with the second of our great elemental benefactors; and after a week of these Westmoreland mountains, you may claim to have established a life-friendship, unless the rheumatism nips it in the bud. It would probably be untrue to assert that there never falls in London so soaking a rain as this that has been falling now for sixteen hours, though to say that such a rain often falls would be still further from the mark. But it is in the conditions that the difference lies. You cannot tramp twelve or fourteen miles in a mackintosh. It often would not keep you dry if you did; but in any case you don't want to. You acknowledge no obligation to respectability of costume; you can change or go to bed when you get in; you are perhaps desperate because these sixteen

hours of rain have followed at a very short interval another spell of sufficient duration to put your liver out of order—you don't care if you do get wet—and accordingly you sally forth, if you are wise, "encased in tourists' flannel"—no more, save boots and stockings.

Your introduction to our friend in these conditions is a little chilly, perhaps. He meets your somewhat boisterous and dare-devil greeting with a gust of wet wind that lifts your hat for you, and promptly injects a small waterspout at the nape of the neck which slides down your spine and makes you shiver. But this is merely meant to test the sincerity of your profession of friendship. Persevere; march on; meet him frankly, and you will soon be on a warmer footing. After a mile or two it will no more be the clammy finger of suspicion down your collar, but a good, hearty, streaming embrace. The rain will be enfolding you all the more closely for your flannel shirt, and lest you should find the warmth enervating, he will let his fingers dance upon your face, bracing you with their cool but tingling touch. Yes! to meet the ever-active elements with an energy that imitates their own and the exercise of a will that is the one thing they lack—this is perhaps the most perfectly satisfactory playground of healthy man. Walk for a mile in pouring rain, and you will rejoice to walk another, and another; and when you have walked enough, and streaming with sweat and rain turn the corner of your house once more, and the sight of the lamp just lit, and the image of the white table-cloth, and the gleaming knives and shining forks (not to mention the savour of cooking) welcomes you home, and your muscles, that have hitherto given the barely-sufficient signal for retreat, loosen your knees with a delicious ache in anticipation of the easy-chair awaiting you—then—well, *de gustibus non est disputandum*; but what a healthy contempt you and I feel for all those weaklings who do not find this "pure gold!"

A friendship begun in this way will wear well; but there will be occasional little bickerings and coolnesses, no doubt, for the rain is not always the most tactful of visitors, a little apt to turn up when you do not want him and to outstay his welcome. For instance, when one arrives at a railway station after a long journey, with a bicycle ride before one of ten or twenty miles, and starts on this ride in the confidence that the weather will hold up at least until one reaches home—then the first premonitory drops fall upon a somewhat thankless ground. And if you chance to wear spectacles, so that your way before your skidding wheel is soon blurred, and if one of your pedals is loose, and, after you have, to your infinite annoyance, dismounted several times, and reduced your handkerchief to pulp with wiping first your glasses and then your saddle, and used spanner and hammer all in vain—if then the pedal suddenly falls off on the slope of a hill and nearly throws you as the coach comes looming up with giant horses and driver through the mist, and you have to ride the last five or even two or three miles on one pedal, walking up the paltriest hills—then, I allow, relations are likely to be strained for several moments, and your replies to your friend's constant patter may be more cordial than polite. And yet—how often our blessings come in disguise! As your mud-bespattered steed crunches upon the gravel-walk, and the door is thrown open at the sound, and the kindly voice of the housekeeper confers the glory of a hero on you in its shocked surprise, "Eh! Mister Willy, and you do look a'most drownded, to *be* sure! You must have a hot bath this minute, or it'll be the death of you!"—then have you any feeling but that of gratitude towards the friend who stays outside in the cold after ministering in this way to your sensuous comfort and the satisfaction of your pride? And whether you give him his due or no, while you shut him out from sight and hearing with your cosy curtains, he is there at his "silent ministry," filling your bathing-pool in the stream for your bath to-morrow, streaking the hillsides with torrents for your eyes' delight, freshening the colours of all the green things upon the earth, and ready to slip away, silent and uncomplaining, and to leave us gaping under a radiant sky at the marvels he has wrought, and thanking our stars that at last we are rid of "that horrible rain!"

N. C. S.

Why should pain be the first, most familiar, and most enduring experience of man? That he may be disciplined into patience. No pain, no patience.

Competitors of Books.

Is the growth of newspaper reading quite the unmitigated evil some literary men would have us believe? Surely there are newspapers which do good service in the cause of culture. The newspaper reader is not necessarily a smatterer of paragraphs, war news, and the money article. Many subjects are treated in the newspapers with philosophical gravity. A leading article may have all the spirit of statesmanship, and much of the knowledge which is stowed away on library shelves. Some departments of journalism are in the hands of men who write books on their special subjects, and can give the newspaper reader in the course of a column as much for thought as he can digest in spare moments.

It is a mistake to assume that the influence of the newspaper is hostile to literature. Nobody knows better than the publisher and the bookseller that books occupy an increasing space in advertisement columns and reviews. Every new journal announces that literature will receive special consideration. Everything is done by the journalist to pique the public curiosity about new books of all classes. If it be true that the majority of newspaper readers do not read books, the greater the credit to editors for their appeal to the taste of the intelligent minority. When even the most frivolous paper is rarely without some suggestion of the world of letters, it cannot be fairly maintained that the Press is an enemy to intellectual assimilation, and that some new Goldsmith should write—

> Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey,
> Where print accumulates but books decay.

It is possible that in war time the book trade declines because the world has a keener interest in one of the tremendous facts of human life than in literature. The newspaper profits by an emotion which makes the headlines about an imaginary battle more exciting even than a new novel. But we are generally in danger of forgetting that life is more momentous than books, and that when the destinies of nations appeal to our fundamental instincts we turn from the library to study the telegrams.

The really uncompromising competitor of books is athleticism. Mr. Andrew Lang tells us that cycling and golf are amongst the enemies of the book trade. It is well known that the bicycle has played havoc with the booksellers, and on the golf links the disconsolate face of a publisher ought to be found in every "bunker." But general denunciations of golf and cycling are of no avail. Books compete with one another, and it is futile to abuse novels because they monopolise the market. There are periodical protests against the "tyranny of the novel"—a tyranny which is inevitable, simply because the novel is a semblance of life; and life in any sort of decoction is the draught that never palls. The newspaper serves up life every day—actual, palpitating. That is the reason why it is read with "vehemence." It cannot escape remark that men of affairs grow less and less bookish. Contact with reality at first hand weakens the desire to examine the world through other people's spectacles. Truly devoted readers belong to a sedentary class, always in peril of decimation by golf. The stalwarts amongst them are professional literati who make it a point of honour to deplore the unliterary character of the times we live in. A writer of books cannot contemplate the possibility of a declining public without justifiable resentment. If protection were ever restored in this country, he would have excellent reason to call on the Legislature to protect him against the bicycle manufacturers and the makers of golf clubs.

It is thought that a cheaper publication might induce people to read books more and newspapers less. The economic conditions are difficult. Standard and popular novels are now to be had at sixpence each, but this leaves nothing for the author. And it must be sorrowful that many of the cheapest books with a great circulation are not above the intellectual level of journalism. It would be easy to make a list of books which are read with less advantage to the general education than any well-conducted newspaper. Many good books, on the other hand, have so small a public that they could not be cheapened, except at a loss. Mr. Bryce says the worst enemy of books is the circulating library. If this were destroyed, the public would buy instead of hiring. It is a dangerous calculation. When they could no longer borrow books for a small subscription, many readers

would cease to read. Ingenious persons would come to their aid with inexpensive devices for passing the time. Golf and the bicycle would multiply their trophies for triumphal show. Mr. Bryce warns us with justice that the materialism of a spreading empire is no substitute for the literature which is the "best criterion of greatness"; but for all that, we are not a nation of book-buyers. A fine taste in literature is inevitably reserved for the few, and of the many it must be said that no cheapening of books is sufficient to stimulate them to sustain the criterion of national greatness. It is fortunate that the mental sustenance they derive from newspapers is, on the whole, of so high a standard.

The Secret of Ambition.

Dr. Martineau, in one of the innumerable passages of interest in his great work on Ethics suggests an original explanation of ambition. He identifies it with what he calls causal or facultative energy, and regards it as dangerous only when the highest principles of the mind,—pity, love, and reverence,—are specially deficient. The case of an ambitious tyranny, says Dr. Martineau, presents us only with "abuses of a motive which, duly subordinated, has a legitimate sphere, neither narrow nor ignoble." And among the evils of its abuse not the least are to be found in the bad name which it has thence got among the good, and the grossly selfish conception of it among the lower minds who cannot resist its fascinations. It is less by becoming the scourge of his own generation and the desolator of Europe, than by disorganising and corrupting the moral admirations of mankind, that the first Napoleon forfeited the respectful compassion morally due to a suffering exile, and merits the enduring reprobation of history. But against such instances, in which the incentive is worked out to self-idolatry, we must set those in which it has been compatible with self-sacrifice, if it has not even inspired it. Aristides, and Marcus Aurelius, and Alfred the Great among statesmen; Socrates, St. Francis, and Savonarola among reformers; Dante, Michael Angelo, Milton among poets and artists, are among the host of gifted men too high not to know their power and deeply care for it, yet only stimulated by it to profounder prayer for light, and more absolute consecration to the supreme ends of life." Yes, but is it in any true sense an evidence of ambition that a man should know his power and deeply care for it? We should have thought that many of those whom Dr. Martineau has here enumerated were in no sense ambitious men, though they may have known their power and deeply cared for it. So long as they did *not* care either that they themselves should be recognised as the centres of that power, or grudge its passing into other equally able hands, they were surely not ambitious. We can hardly admit that causal or facultative energy is the source of ambition, when we observe that men richer in causal and facultative energy than almost any others in their generation, have been completely free from ambition. Socrates, for instance, was a singular example of causal and facultative energy in the career he chose for himself, and, if we may trust all the pictures of him, a man utterly free from ambition. Might we not say the same confidently of St. Francis of Assisi, and even, perhaps, of Alfred? Is it possible to think of any one whom we know equally intimately, who was less ambitious, in the ordinary sense of the term, than St. Paul, or of one fuller of "causal and facultative energy," and more conscious of the abundance of that energy which welled up in him? As the term "ambition" is ordinarily used, it is certainly not so much a delight in energy and efficiency, as a delight in tracing back influence of any kind to yourself as centre, a delight in *wielding* it rather than in *exerting* it, exultation in it, as making people feel your power *over* them, rather than the joy of making them feel their own lives more efficient as a consequence of your efforts. There is often an ample store of capacity, and of conscious exulting capacity, which is not in the least ambitious; capacity which delights only in reducing the world to order, but not in dwelling on itself as the origin of that order; capacity which, so soon as it has succeeded in banishing confusion, takes no further interest in the question how much of the feat was due to its own efforts, and how much to that of others. Take the case, for instance, of a man well known to our generation, and still better known to the last generation, the case of Dr. Arnold. Where was there ever a man, not of the very first rank

of greatness, in whom facultative or causal energy was richer? Where was there ever one who took more delight in its exercise? And where was there ever one who seemed to be less ambitious, in the proper sense of the term, less eager to assert his authority for the sake of asserting it, less anxious to compel others to recognise it so long as it produced the effect he wished, less jealous of having the good which he had effected ascribed to others? Or, again, who was ever fuller of facultative and causal energy than Clarkson, and yet who could apply to him the adjective "ambitious?" Surely ambition is not measured by the delight in energy, or even in efficiency, but by the delight in contemplating yourself as the source of that energy,—the test being a profound jealousy of yielding up to any one else the power you have been accustomed to exert. As we understand the difference between the strictly praiseworthy exultation in faculty, and ambition, the one is purely disinterested and exults in the excellence of the work done, not in the power of the worker; the other is essentially self-interested, and would bitterly resent being superseded even by a far more effective kind of facultative energy if it proceeded from another.

On the Use of Flowers.

Our outward life requires them not;
Then wherefore had they birth?—
To minister delight to man,
To beautify the Earth.

M. HOWITT.

I am so fond of flowers, that I must ask your forbearance if I seem to give their cultivation too high a place amongst the duties and pleasures of life. They always seem to me to be so fresh and pure, as if just from the hand of God, that I think their value can scarcely be too highly estimated. One of the first uses of flowers is, I believe, the delight and refreshment they give to many a weary wanderer; and the help they often are, not only in pleasing the eye, but of calling the anxious heart away, unconsciously, from its cares and troubles. The practice of taking a bouquet of flowers to a Sunday School Adult Class, and having this carried to the bedside of some sufferer, has increased of late years, and is, I believe, a source of good to those who are sharers in the mission. The men or women who take part in such a class, look anxiously and hopefully for their turn to be the bearers of such a treasure to their sick friend or neighbour.

Flowers have a very refining influence. The young lady who in her daily walks culls the season's brightest wayside gems, small and retiring though they may be, has her perceptions cultivated, her gentle touch improved, and her love of the beauty of form and colour intensified and increased. I have sometimes been amused to watch the gathering of a bouquet by two equally kind sisters. One, who "does not care much for flowers," yet delights in giving pleasure, takes her garden scissors, cuts the brightest and perhaps the largest flowers she sees, never stopping to notice that some of the petals are faded, and others following rapidly the same way. She looks here, and takes a flower she thinks is bright; there, and cuts off a handful; and having, as she believes, gathered a large and beautiful bouquet, she hands it to the lady whom she has thus stepped out of her course to please. Perhaps if we could unperceived follow those flowers to their destination, we should see the half of them lying wasted, fallen to pieces, and quite unfit to ornament the room for which they were intended; and by the thoughtless cutting of those full-grown and showy flowers, the garden may for that day have lost its brilliance. The other sister, who loves flowers for their purity and beauty, glides from plant to plant, cutting off one blossom here, which will scarcely be missed from its modest position; another there, which will bloom in full freshness in the vase—a bit of sweet-scented beauty which by its removal improves the garden, while it adds to her treasures; and so from flower to shrub, and from rose-tree to flower again, she flits along—the selection being intuitively made with such perfection, that no blossom is misplaced, or a single fading flower added to the posy.

This nicety of observation and touch does not end in the service of the garden. A mind that responds to the beauty of the floral world will never be satisfied with imperfect or coarsely finished work of any kind. The handling of flowers so constantly sets before the eye their perfection, that by-and-by the aim at perfection

in all that is done becomes, as it were, second nature.

The pleasure that flowers give to invalids among the poor, who rarely see any, might teach some of us a lesson we should do well to learn. The first time I saw this was many years ago, when I was a very young housekeeper, and was startled one Sunday morning by the request, from a working blacksmith, for some grapes for his sick wife We had no greenhouse or vinery. Our little bit of garden was most unassuming, and I could not think what made the man come to me. However, I told him that I believed a friend of ours had some early grapes and if I could get some, his wife should have them in the afternoon. My husband walked out with me to our friend's house. Some grapes were most willingly given for the invalid, and some flowers for ourselves. I took two or three pretty and sweet flowers—I remember that a carnation and two sweet-peas formed part—tied them together; and we took them with the fruit to the sick woman. We were taken up to her bedroom. There she lay, pale and emaciated, with that ominous flush on her cheeks which too truly confirmed her husband's words. We handed her the longed-for grapes. She was "much obliged." But when I held out to her the few flowers I had brought, she snatched them so eagerly that I was startled and awed to see the delight they gave to one who was evidently so near the confines of the Unknown.

I called again in a day or two, and saw the flowers carefully preserved and looking bright in a doctor's medicine bottle close by her bedside. That scene taught me a lesson I have never forgotten.

Pulpit Tediousness.

"Tediousness," says Dr. Johnson, "is the most fatal of all faults; negligences or errors are single or local, but tediousness pervades the whole. Other faults are censured and forgotten, but the power of tediousness propagates itself. He who is weary the first hour is more weary the second, as bodies forced into motion contrary to their tendency pass more and more slowly through every successive interval of space. Unhappily, this pernicious failure is that which an author or speaker is least able to discover."

Not long ago I met a clergyman in whom I was interested—a worthy man, who somehow did not seem to "get on." Nobody had anything against him, but nobody wanted to hear him preach. He was sound, solid, pious, and all that, but—

Venturing on the privilege which belongs to a friend, I said to him, "My dear brother, I hear only one fault found with you. People say that you preach very long; that you make nothing of preaching for an hour, or an hour and a quarter."

He answered: "Well, when I take up a subject, I like to discuss it fully. I like to do justice to a subject, even if I have to go rather round the ordinary limits."

"Gracious grandmother!" I exclaimed, "justice to the subject! Is no justice or mercy to be shown the audience? Is the sermon the means or the end? Did God Almighty send you into the world to discuss subjects, or to convert souls? If you are to live for the subject, if it is to feed and clothe you, and support your children, and if the subject is to recompense you at the day of judgment, why I have nothing further to offer. But if it is souls that you are to live for, then, for mercy's sake, look out for the souls, and let the subject take care of itself."

What is wealth good for except as an instrument of love and refinement?

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Seed Corn.

As a rule, men who go wrong do not lay themselves out deliberately to go wrong; on the contrary, they *mean* to go right. They do not elect to fall; nevertheless they fall. Why? Because they keep no watch.

Do you think that Robert Burns deliberately meant and planned to go wrong? Not at all. He had the most glowing conceptions of the beauty of goodness, and the claims of duty, of the splendour of an upright manhood; but he thought all this would come of itself, easily and naturally, as the hair grows upon the head. He kept no watch!

"'Tis one thing to be tempted; 'tis another to fall;" and he falls who keeps no watch.

Love—love of God, love of man—is the one indispensable element of religion. Everything gained but this, and religion is left like the gold setting from which the diamond has dropped out.

There is no equivalent or substitute for love. Apostolicity is nothing; orthodoxy is nothing; reverence is nothing, if the element is lacking. Even conscience fails if there be no love, for conscience alone drives men away from God, and fills them with fears. Conscience has no solar heat; only love has that.

Love it is, and not conscience—that is God's regent in a human soul, because it can govern the soul as nothing else can.

If a man is a bishop and yet loves his fellow-men, he has a chance, spite of his bishopric, of getting to heaven.

And though a man be a Calvinist, if he only loves, his theology will not much hurt him. For there is a heart-logic that is more than head-logic.

Little is done in this world by controversy. It is more to create an atmosphere.

The world is richer than we sometimes think. For the world is full of good men and women.

Vicarious suffering is a doctrine founded on the facts of human life. There are many that object to it, and there are many statements of it that are objectionable; but the thing itself is inherent in human nature. What mother is there that does not vicariously suffer for her child? What child was ever well brought up but the reason was because he had some one to suffer for him, to think for him, to plan for him, to be burdened with care and anxiety for him, to go before him and tread down the thorns and nettles?

Men are shocked at the idea of a *suffering* God, but can Love love and not suffer? It is incredible.

How great a favour does one bestow on us who gives us faith in men and in human qualities!

A man who does not believe in virtue, nor in conscience, nor in anybody's unselfishness; who does not believe in heroic men, nor in disinterested men, but who says, with the cheap sneer of the shallow, worldly mind, that "every man has his price"—such a man is a charnel-house. Such a man is but a receptacle of death and rottenness.

Truth may be handled with unnecessary offence—in rudeness and brutality. "Speaking the truth in love" is a difficult art.

It is important, no doubt, to lay up treasure in your pocket; but it is a thousand times more important to lay up treasure in your heart.

Every time you betray honour and trust for advantage, you are a Judas! You crucify the Lord afresh.

Sweeter than Joy, tho' Joy might abide,
Dearer than Love, tho' Love might endure,
Is this thing: for a man to have died
For the wronged and the poor!

Let none be glad until all are free,
The song be still and the banner furled,
Till all have seen what the poets see,
And foretell to the world!

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

Polly Putoff.

Her real name was Polly Putnam, but everybody called her Polly Putoff. Of course, you can guess how she came to have such a name. It was because she put off everything as long as she possibly could.

"Oh! you can depend on Polly for one thing," Uncle Will would say. "You can depend on her putting off everything, but that is all you can depend on." And I am sorry to say he spoke the truth.

"Polly, Polly," mother would say in despair, "how shall I ever break you of this dreadful habit?"

It was just three days to Polly's birthday, and she had been wondering very much what her mother and father intended to give her. She thought a music-box would be the best thing, but she was almost afraid to hope for that. A man who went about selling them had brought some to the house, and Polly had gone wild with delight over their pretty musical tinkle.

"Polly," mother said that morning, "here is a letter that I want you to post before school."

"Yes, mother," answered Polly, putting the letter in her pocket.

As she reached the school-house, she saw the girls playing; and she stopped "just a moment." Then the bell rang, so she could not post the letter then. She looked at the address. It was directed to a man in the next town. "Oh, it hasn't got very far to go. I will post it after school."

After school she forgot all about it.

"Did you post my letter, Polly?" asked mother, when Polly was studying her lessons that evening.

Polly's face grew very red, and she put her hand in her pocket. "I will post it in the morning," she said, faintly.

"It is too late," answered mother. "The man to whom the letter is directed went away this evening, and I haven't got his address. It really only matters to yourself, for it was an order for a music-box for your birthday."

"O mother," exclaimed Polly, "is it really too late?"

"I don't know where he is now," said mother. "If you had not put off posting the letter, he would have received it before he started, and sent the music-box. It is too late now."

Wasn't that a hard lesson? It cured Polly, though; and she has nearly lost her old name.

Jerry's Chocolate Cake.

"When I am a man," said Jerry Whitamore, searching his plate anxiously for crumbs of vanished cake, "I am going to have a whole chocolate cake to myself,—a whole, big, round chocolate cake—mother. I am, indeed! and nobody shall have a bite of it. I would like to see how it feels to eat a whole cake by myself."

"You need not wait until you are a man," said his mother. "I will make you one to-morrow."

"Will you really, mother,—all to myself?"

"Yes: on one condition,—that you will not give anybody a bite of it while it lasts."

"Ho! I can easily promise you that; for I don't want anybody to help me to eat it, I can tell you."

Mrs. Whitamore sighed a little, and wondered if Jerry was as selfish a little boy as he thought he was; but she made him the cake. As soon as the icing was firm, Jerry cut a big slice for himself, and sat down on the kitchen step to eat it. His little brother Rob came and stood in front of him, with his hands behind his back.

"Wis' I had a piece!" said Rob, looking at Jerry.

"Mother," called Jerry, "can't I give Rob a piece?"

"Certainly not," answered his mother.

"Go away, then, Rob, and don't watch me eat it," begged Jerry. But no! There stood the little man, eyeing the cake until it was gone; while two big tears rolled down his cheeks.

"That piece didn't taste good one bit," said Jerry to himself. "I won't eat any more when Rob is around."

The next time he took a piece he slipped out of the door to hide himself in the wood-shed. Bounce, the little black-and-tan terrier, thinking he was going out to play, slipped after him; but, just before the couple got out of sight, the mother called, "Jerry, remember not to give Bounce any cake."

"Oh, isn't that a pity!" said Jerry to Bounce. And then he had to eat his cake with Bounce begging for every bite. It was worse than Rob, because he couldn't explain to the dog.

"There! that's two pieces of cake spoiled for me!" grumbled Jerry. "Eating a whole cake isn't half as much fun as it's cracked up to be."

When the tea-bell rang, Jerry was just as ready for bread and butter and milk as if he had not tasted anything for twelve hours; and there, on his upturned plate, was a half of what the Whitamore children called a "snowball." It was a white cake, white inside, with white crumbs and citron, and round and white outside, with particularly nice sugar-icing. Nobody made just those cakes except Aunt Martha Mason.

"That cake was sent to Rob, Jerry; and, of his own accord, he asked me to save you a piece," when, lo! to everybody's surprise, big, boyish Jerry burst out crying. "I hate chocolate cake, mother!" he said. "I never want to see another piece as long as I live!"

So Mrs. Whitamore knew that Jerry had learned his lesson. She did not believe that he would ever again think anything sweeter that he kept to himself. "Suppose we bring out your cake, and eat it for supper?" she said to her little boy.

Jerry's face cleared all in a minute. "O mother," he said, "that would be so nice!"

And I think that, if Rob and Bounce had been allowed to eat all that Jerry wanted them to have, they would both have dreamed of their great-grandfathers that night.